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Trials of suitability testing prior to admission to teacher education in Sweden

RELEVANCE FOR NORDIC EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
Contemporary Swedish reports on teacher education and the teaching profession focus decreasing status of the teaching profession (Skolvärlden, 2014), a large future teacher shortage (Regeringen, 2016), major defection from teacher education (UKÄ 2016), an increasing number of complaints against individual teachers and schools (Skolinspektionen 2015) and falling ratings in PISA's knowledge assessments (OECD 2015). Related concerns are found in the other Nordic countries, with the exception of Finland (Nordic Council of Ministers 2009).

In many of the problems described the good teacher is a prerequisite for improvement. The state's public inquiry (SOU 2008:109) states that "the single most important factor for a school system to be successful is that the right people become teachers." (ibid., p.424)

In 2014 The Swedish government asked for the holding of “a trial with requirements for suitability tests before entering the teacher and preschool teacher education ”. Linnaeus University has, as one of two universities, been responsible for developing and trying out the suitability tests prior to admission in autumn 2016.

The Linnaeus suitability tests were divided into three subtests regarding five content domains: a) written communications skills, b) oral communications skills, c) the ability to take a leadership role, d) interactive capabilities and e) ability to self-reflection and motivation for the teaching profession. A score was given for each of the five content domains.

The presentation outlines the experience gained so far based on 168 applicants who have undergone the admittance test in 2016, as well as on 75 already admitted teacher students who participated in the prior simulated testing sessions during their first month at university in 2015.

RESEARCH AIM
The research aim addresses how 113 students preacademic results on the five domains in the suitability tests relate to their early achievements in both theoretical and teacher practice courses in teacher education.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
The study is framed within theories of admission research noting fields of tension where different interests meet. Admission test should give fair access to teacher education whilst justice also must include that future pupils are given access to the good teachers (Childs et al, 2011).

Previous studies has indicated that tests on written communication can predict academic success (Hernandez et al, 2006). Previous studies show varying results regarding to what extent socially interactive elements in suitability testing can predict success in teacher practice courses (Shechtman, 1989; Kosnik et al, 2005).

RESEARCH DESIGN
Teacher Students (113) results on suitability tests are compared to their performance on theoretical courses and teacher practice courses in teacher education. Correlations are calculated for the relations between results of the five content domains in the suitability test.

FINDINGS
Will consist of a comparision of the results of 113 Teacher Student on Linnaeus suitability tests compared with their results in early theoretical courses as well as in their first teacher training courses in teacher education.